



ITINERARIO LIBERTY



Sanctuary of the Most Holy Crucifix

Seat of a secular cult of the image of the Most Holy Crucifix, a wooden sculpture of the end of the XIV century, the Sanctuary – oratory of the Most Holy Crucifix, arose in the XVIII century on the place of the Company of the Corpus Domini, also known as “of the Beaten” and “of the Blacks”, the oratory of which was rebuilt right on its left side. The architectural complex was seriously damaged by the earthquake of the 29th. June 1919, so much so that in the subsequent years it was necessary to begin the reconstruction of most of the church and the chapel used as the seat of the Company of the Blacks.

On this occasion the San Lorenzo Furnaces gave their services, of which few but significant traces remain today. On the walls at the end of the presbytery of the oratory of the Company of the Blacks, there is a beautiful window divided into three panels, each of which is framed by console motifs and rosettes of evident sixteenth century citation. The right-hand sector shows a coat of arms at the centre, of late Renaissance taste, too, related to the Company of the Blacks, with the Eucharistic symbols of the chalice and the host, and the gridiron of the holy martyr patron of the village. The window was donated, as is evidenced by the inscriptions one may read on it, by the Furnaces and by Chino and Teresa Chini in 1922.

The hand-manufactured articles, of appreciable quality, have suffered outstanding and serious losses and have probably also been disassembled and re-assembled incorrectly, since some elements of the surviving decoration do not coincide perfectly. Coming out of the chapel of the Confraternity and passing under the open archway of the Sanctuary one may admire two reliefs in ceramics portraying the Herald Angel and the Heralded Madonna, above the side doors of the church, which are figures derived from the Annunciation of the Hospital of the Innocents in Florence, work of Andrea della Robbia, of which Augusto Chini made a copy, preserved in the St. Francis Rest Home.

The great lunette in majolica in relief, always positioned under the atrium of the Sanctuary, which portrays the coats of arms of the Mugellan municipalities, was realized by Augusto Chini. In a setting adjoining the Sanctuary, a beautiful panel on majolician tiles portraying **St. John the Baptist** is kept. A second example of this monumental painted panel in which, once more, medieval, Renaissance and Liberty suggestions converge, is known of, evidently taken from the same drawing, attributed to Galileo Chini.

More or less at the same time, coinciding with the restoration work of the Sanctuary, to which it was probably destined from the beginning, this artefact is to be noted for its remarkable artistic quality, and for the creative vein, even if softened and restrained by the destination of the work and by its religious character. Another environment of the architectural complex of the Sanctuary preserves a monumental chandelier in painted glass, wrought iron and ceramics. It is one of the rare examples still preserved in the area, and is probably due to the work of Tito Chini in the second half of the twenties. In this type of production, the frames of which, in wrought iron, were realized in a special department set up inside the Furnaces, Tito feels the influence of Galileo more than elsewhere.

In 1941 Tito Chini was entrusted with the realization of the internal decoration of the church re-built after the earthquake in 1919, by the Salesians, who had, in the meantime, set up one of their institutions in Borgo St. Lawrence. He prepared the sketches of those decorations, which were never carried out, three of which are preserved and are now kept at the Sanctuary of the Most Holy Crucifix. They are works of which one understands that Tito had thought of a complex decoration which completely the space available, occupied, according to a “baroque” inspiration.